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ICC suspends Sri Lanka Cricket

REUTERS

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has suspended Sri Lanka Cricket's (SLC) membership with immediate effect for government interference, the sport's governing body said on Friday.

Sri Lanka's ministry of sport dismissed SLC's board and replaced it with an interim committee following the country's poor performance at this year's World Cup but the sacking was stayed by Sri Lanka's Court of Appeal.

"The ICC Board met today and determined that Sri Lanka Cricket is in serious breach of its obligations as a Member," it said in a statement.

"In particular, the requirement to manage its affairs autonomously and ensure that there is no government interference in the governance, regulation and/or administration of cricket in Sri Lanka.

"The conditions of the suspension will be decided by the ICC Board in due course."

Sri Lanka won only two of their nine games at the World Cup and sit ninth in the 10-team standings.

Aussies to take late call on Maxwell

AGENCIES

Australia will take a late call on Glenn Maxwell's participation in their World Cup game against Bangladesh after the all-rounder batted through severe cramps to script an improbable win over Afghanistan.

Maxwell endured cramps in his calf, shin,



hamstring, and toes before experiencing back spasms in Mumbai on Tuesday but made an outrageous double century to help Australia beat the Asian side and reach the semifinals, where they will face third-placed South Africa.

"He's definitely been in full recovery mode the last few days. We all saw the effects of the innings and in particular the heat. So I think today's a big day, see how he pulls up," Australia bowling coach Daniel Vettori told reporters on Friday.

"Obviously, we've had a couple of days off so there's been no training. He's not here today but we'll just see how he feels as the day continues. It's obviously been pretty hectic for him the last few days."

Vettori said Maxwell would not be put through a fitness test for the Bangladesh game.

"It'll be how he feels," Vettori added. "We understand now that the semifinal is pretty definitive in Kolkata on November 16 and it'll be a build towards that."

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Mushfiqur Rahim gears up with some batting practice at the nets as Bangladesh look to end their already subpar World Cup campaign on a positive note when they face five-time World Champions Australia, who are flying high and likely to have star batter Steve Smith back for the fixture in Pune today.

PHOTO: AFP

Order restoration still far off

MAZHAR UDDIN from Pune

There was ample confusion and controversies even before Bangladesh boarded their India-bound flight for the ICC World Cup campaign and, as the Tigers prepare to face Australia today in Pune to conclude their disastrous show in the apex event, the scenario remains much the same.

It all started when the selectors revealed the World Cup roster, removing seasoned opener Tamim Iqbal due to injury concerns. But the situation had quickly devolved into chaos following skipper Shakib Al Hasan's vitriolic attack on the former captain during an interview on a private TV channel hours before flying to India.

Despite starting the World Cup with a win over Afghanistan, the Tigers slipped to suffer six successive defeats, with batting failure emerging as the major concern in the Bangladesh camp.

Apart from Mahmudullah Riyad's century against South Africa, none of the Bangladeshi batters were able to hit three digits at the World Cup, which depicts the overall scenario of the batting unit.

The continuous shuffling of the batting order raised concerns, while a lack of options in the batting unit left the team management in disarray throughout the competition.

The victory over Sri Lanka did provide some solace to the demoralised Tigers, but it was not enough to paper over the cracks.

The humiliating defeat to the Netherlands prior had added to the Tigers' misery by leaps and bounds. As the tournament went on, dissatisfaction in the Bangladesh dressing room began to emerge, reflecting in the team's performance on the field as well.

The most recent example involves pace-bowling coach Allan Donald. Bangladesh

In a team meeting yesterday in Pune, the team management requested Donald to explain his conduct since they did not appreciate him publicly condemning the team's on-field decision that led to Angelo Matthews' timed-out dismissal against Sri Lanka. Donald eventually stated during that meeting that he would not be renewing his contract.

Srinivas Chandrashekar, the Tigers' performance analyst, has also declared that he will leave the team after the World Cup game against Australia. There have been reports that the board will not extend contracts with spin-bowling coach Rangana Herath.

Meanwhile, there has been criticism of head coach Chandika Hathurusingha as well, but it has been reported that the board intends to keep the Sri Lankan -- who took over the post earlier this year -- for another two years. Also expected to finish out his two-year deal with BCB is assistant coach Nic Pothas, who was hired in April of this year.

Furthermore, there is also widespread criticism of the Minhajul Abedin-led selection panel, and only time will tell whether the board makes additional changes following the World Cup campaign.

It appears the instability in Bangladesh cricket, both on and off the field, needs to be resolved quickly, or else the Tigers may find it near-impossible to restore to their last stable configuration.

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Cricket Board (BCB) initially signed the South Africa legend in March last year for the ICC T20 World Cup before extending his contract until the ongoing ODI World Cup. Despite BCB's request, Donald was hesitant to extend his contract and, according to sources, expressed his dissatisfaction with one of the team management members.

- Bangladesh have a very poor head-to-head record against Australia in ODIs, with the Tigers managing just a solitary win in the 21 matches against the Aussies. Australia won 19 while one match yielded no result.
- The Tigers' only ODI win against Australia came back in 2005 in Cardiff. Mohammad Ashraful's century guided Bangladesh to a memorable five-wicket win in a tri-nation series also involving England.
- Bangladesh have lost all three of their match-ups against the five-time World Champions in the World Cup.
- Australia have already confirmed their semifinal spot while Bangladesh will be vying for a win to further boost their chances of a top-eight finish that would see them qualify for the 2025 Champions Trophy.
- Australia and Bangladesh have not played against each other in ODIs since the 2019 World Cup.
- Bangladesh suffered a seven-wicket defeat against hosts India in their first-ever match at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune earlier this World Cup while Australia won their only game played at the venue in 2013.

Confident Kiwis ready for WORLD CUP BUSINESS END

REUTERS, Bengaluru

Paceman Lockie Ferguson said New Zealand would head into a likely World Cup semifinal against India charged with confidence after snapping a four-match losing streak against Sri Lanka in their last round-robin clash on Thursday.

Thursday's crushing five-wicket victory left Pakistan and Afghanistan requiring miraculous wins in their final opening-round matches to displace the Black Caps from the semifinals.

"We've had some tight games and some tight losses over the last few weeks but certainly within the camp there's a lot of confidence in the type of cricket we play," Ferguson said after the match against Sri Lanka.

"We know that if we play the way we want to play, we'll come out on the right side of the draw. We'll see what happens in the last few games ... hopefully we'll have a couple more pushes."

Ferguson, who missed two of New Zealand's four defeats with an Achilles injury, returned with figures of 2-35 from a fiery spell at M Chinnaswamy Stadium against the Lankans.

After losing to Pakistan on the Duckworth-Lewis method despite scoring more than 400 runs in their previous match, New Zealand really hit their straps in the

bowling department to restrict Sri Lanka to 171.

Strike duo Trent Boult and Tim Southee accounted for four top order wickets, Ferguson and spinner Mitch Santner took over in the middle overs before all-rounder Rachin Ravindra mopped up the tail.

"Throughout the World Cup, the bowling attacks that have done well have passed the baton to the next bowler," Ferguson added.

"The more you build the pressure, eventually something will happen and ... today, we got some treats for some really good bowling.

"We probably haven't had as much as we'd have liked over the whole World Cup but it was nice to see Boult and Tim get some early wickets."

New Zealand have reached the final of the last two World Cups and beat India to reach the title-decider in 2019, Ferguson's breakout

tournament. Ferguson was confident he would be fit to play a role against the hosts if, as is likely, New Zealand's place in the semifinals for the fourth straight World Cup is confirmed.

The 32-year-old said the injury had been just "niggly" enough to prevent him from bowling his full quota in the matches he missed, but hard work in the gym had paid off.



Azmatullah Omarzai came agonisingly close to being Afghanistan's second batter with a World Cup ton but the right-hander was left stranded on 97 not out in their final pool fixture against South Africa at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad yesterday. Even though Omarzai failed to clinch his maiden ODI ton, his 107-ball knock that included seven boundaries and three maximums guided the Afghans to 244 despite a middle-order wobble.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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